



Missed a Payroll Tax Deadline?

Here's what you should do



Missed a Payroll Tax Deadline? Here's what you should do

Overview

Let's face it—payroll [tax](#) deadlines aren't exactly exciting. Between running your business, putting out daily fires, and just trying to stay afloat, it's easy for one to slip by. Maybe your calendar reminder didn't fire. Maybe it was a long weekend. Or maybe it just... fell off the radar.

Whatever the reason, missing a payroll tax deadline happens, and it's not the end of the world.

In this post, we'll walk you through what happens when you miss a payroll tax filing deadline—and exactly what to do next to make it right.

Introduction

You open your email, and your stomach drops.

There it is: a notice from the IRS (or your state agency), telling you that you missed a payroll tax deadline. There might be penalties. Interest. Maybe even a bill.

First of all—breathe. This happens more often than you think. What matters now is how quickly you act.

Let's break it down, step by step.

1. First, Figure Out What You Actually Missed

Before you panic, pause.

There are different kinds of payroll tax deadlines, and not all of them carry the same weight.

Ask yourself:

Did you miss making a deposit (i.e., sending the money)?

Or was it filing a form (like Form 941)?

Was it federal or state?

Did it happen last week or last month?

The sooner you pinpoint what went wrong, the sooner you can start fixing it. Check your accounting software, payroll platform, or just pick up the phone and call your accountant.

2. File and/or Pay—Immediately

The longer you wait, the worse it gets. The IRS (and most state agencies) start charging penalties and interest the day after your deadline.

So here's the game plan:

Missed a tax deposit? Pay what you owe ASAP—even if it's not the full amount.

Missed a filing deadline? Get that form in today.

Even partial payments help. Showing that you're taking action counts in your favor later if you need to negotiate.

3. Know What Kind of Penalties to Expect

Nobody likes this part, but it's important to know what you might be dealing with:

Late deposits? Penalties range from 2% to 15%, depending on how late you are.

Late filings? You could face 5% of the unpaid tax per month (up to 25%).

Interest? That adds up daily, based on the unpaid balance.

BUT here's the good news: if this is your first mistake or there were legit reasons (natural disaster, medical emergency, software glitch), you might qualify for penalty abatement. More on that soon.

4. If You Got a Notice, Respond—Don't Ignore It

If the IRS or your state tax agency has already sent you a letter, don't shove it in a drawer.

Here's what to do:

Read the notice closely. Check dates, dollar amounts, and your business details.

If something looks off, call or respond in writing.

Can't pay the full amount? Ask for a payment plan.

Tip: Being proactive shows you're serious. That can make a big difference if you're asking for penalty relief.

5. Set Up a System So It Doesn't Happen Again

Let's be real—you've got enough on your plate without worrying about tax deadlines. So if payroll is tripping you up, it's time to build some guardrails.

Set calendar reminders a week or two ahead of each due date.

Use payroll software (like Gusto or QuickBooks Payroll) that automates filing and payments.

Or, consider outsourcing to a payroll/bookkeeping service that handles it for you.

No shame in getting help—especially if it saves you from another penalty letter.

Conclusion

Missing a payroll tax deadline is stressful. But it's not fatal.

Act fast, understand what happened, communicate with the right people, and take steps to prevent it next time. The IRS doesn't expect perfection, but they do expect effort.

And if you're tired of juggling spreadsheets, forms, and tax notices, [software](#) like BDGAGSS, Gusto, QuickBooks Payroll, or full-service providers like BDGAGSS can help take it off your plate—for good.

You didn't start a business to chase deadlines. Let's fix this one, and then set you up so it doesn't happen again.

Blogged by: [BDGAGSS](#)